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THE FACE

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PHOTO SIMON F

TOLKEIN MEETS THE MUPPETS? CHARACTERS FROM MUPPETEER JIM HENSON'S UPCOMING FANTASY FLICK, THE DARK CRYSTAL (SEE RIGHT)

■ *The Dark Crystal* is a fantasy film with a difference. One of the last major features to be financed by Lord Grade, it is a Tolkeinesque excursion into a strange world of wizards, demons, rites and rituals and Good and Evil. Heard it all before? Maybe so, but when did you last see a live action feature whose entire cast consists of puppets? *The Dark Crystal* is the brainchild of Muppeteer Jim Henson who began work on the project at the end of 1977 in collaboration with fantasy illustrator Brian Froud. The result is light years away from The Muppets. In the same way that Yoda in *The Empire Strikes Back* was a far remove from Kermit, the characters in *The Dark Crystal* are another step towards the illusion of reality as defined by the puppeteer. As a foretaste of what you can expect, a whole series of haute couture creations inspired by the movie will be on sale and display at Liberty's in December, with price tags ranging from £90 to £365. During the same month, The Barbican will be holding an exhibition of puppets, costumes and sets from the film. *Dark Crystal* opens in London on February 13, 1983, by which time it is hoped *E.T.* fever will have cooled. *Neil Norman*